

# SerdangSUN

A Tradition of Giving, a Culture of Bonding

UPM Alumni Magazine

## Another Son of Serdang Soil

...Mohd Noor Ismail ... pg 4

## Vice Chancellor

Prof. Datuk Dr. Nik Mustapha R. Abdullah

## Challenges & Inspirations

... pg 8

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**UPM**  
UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA





# In the Spi

It is indeed a great pleasure to put the magazine back in circulation for alumni and friends of UPM to enjoy and reminisce the past. It has been another challenge amidst other tasks that the editorial team had to fulfill and be responsible. Nevertheless with the cooperation of the members, we prevailed and succeeded in publishing the second issue of Serdang Sun just in time for the 33rd UPM Convocation. Perhaps there is a belief, that it would be easier to produce the second issue as we did alright with the first one.

It's a great feeling that we prevailed to the end, even though in the beginning, the take off was more like facing a pile of reports. While editing them, some of the silliest lines make us laugh and we

*the creative bulls & angels...*



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# rit of Serdang

endured it. It is the joy of writing and the discovery of new passion that motivate us. Life is not just work in the office but the fun in having a common goal put for this magazine. Such work embodies lots of imagination, devotion, dedication and commitment for the *Alma mater*. Thanks to you again team!

With 'Bonding and Belonging', as in the Unbeatable Spirit of the ROTU graduates, it signifies the strength of alumni produced in Serdang and thus fitting the theme of the magazine. This issue hopes to recapture such vigour in the generations created through the training and knowledge gained at UPM. The nation needs the contributions of our brightest men and women in various fields which are critical to the economic growth of the nation. To help turn the situation around, we see our roles in inspiring students and young alumni to assume these responsibilities. The feature on an international alumni is an inspirational call for alumni's interest, loyalty and leadership, thus linking them to issues that interest the international community and the university. How can one forgets UPM, Serdang, a place for decades that

have generated sentiments and emotions which are difficult to express in words. These are some of the interesting sagas this issue will share with you.

August 8 to 11, 2009, the dates for the 33rd Convocation Celebration, is an occasion that commemorates the sense of achievement and happiness for all graduates and the

academe. UPM and the Serdang Sun welcome the new graduates who will be joining our rank as alumni. There is no limit to how good this unique Serdang can be to them. We are eager to join them in their ventures and for them to write their own chapters in the history of Universiti Putra Malaysia. Just like the senior alumni, they too will uphold the highest aspirations for UPM and there should be no limits to such desires. For alumni who are already engaged in one way or another to the *Alma mater*, the Serdang Sun highlights a few of them. They have been very deeply bonded to the *Alma mater* through their untiring services and contribution to the association.

We hope you will find the articles inspiring and meaningful. We look forward to attract many more ALUMNI to give and be bonded to UPM as you move on with your daily lives.

Associate Prof Dr Rohani Ibrahim (*Dip Agri*, 1972)  
Director of Alumni Centre



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# Another Son of Serdang Soil

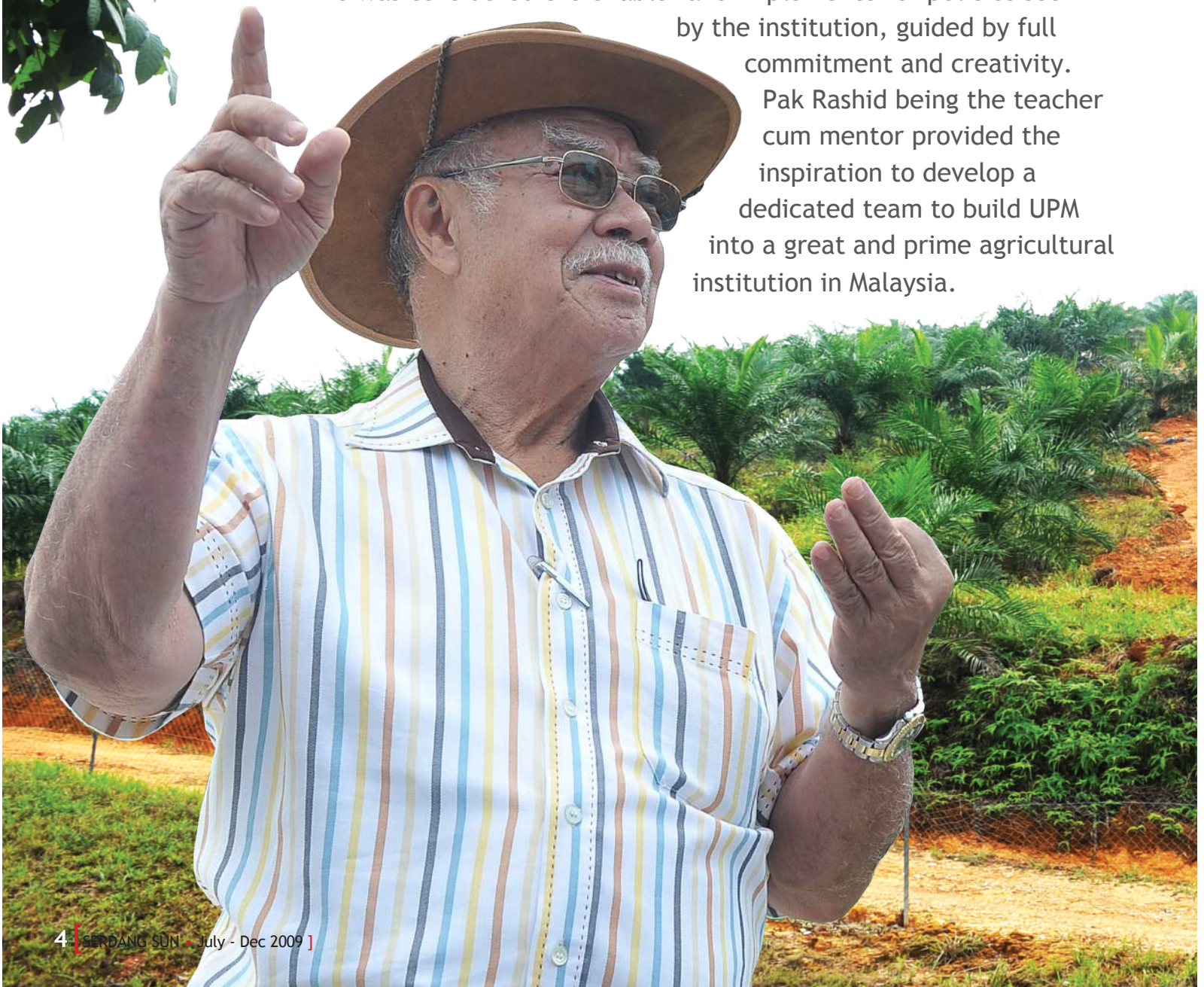
...Mohd Noor Ismail

• Associate Prof Dr. Rohani Ibrahim  
(Dip Agri, 1972)

Three ways of life adhered to Dato' Dr. Hj Mohd. Noor Ismail (Dip Agric, 1955), "Absolute faith and obedience to Allah, be charitable" - a practical man with a simple philosophy, ones that guided him to serve and continue to serve during his lifetime. Mohd Noor is a dynamic figure in the agriculture landscape of Malaysia. For UPM, he was considered the enabler and implementer of policies set

by the institution, guided by full commitment and creativity.

Pak Rashid being the teacher cum mentor provided the inspiration to develop a dedicated team to build UPM into a great and prime agricultural institution in Malaysia.





The only boy in the family of two children, Mohd Noor completed his school years in Sekolah Melayu, Preparatory School and Government English School (1941-1951), Muar Johore. He continued his studies at the College of Agriculture Malaya for three years and attained his Diploma of Agriculture in 1955. "Coming from a farming background with an abundance of experience from selling *nasi lemak*, *tapai*, fish, coconut and durians, joining the Agriculture College served as a means of obtaining new exposure to a more formal and scientific agriculture knowledge and experience for me. Since my school days, planting rice and tapping rubber, was a routine for me. I considered myself already as a practicing agriculturist and businessman even before entering Serdang College. Maybe for that reason my hands-on approach was noticed by the teachers. For three years at Serdang I won the First Prize award for Field Work," he said. Mohd Noor was so responsible and enterprising that his uncle appointed him as the sole agent for the uncle's fishing catch. Selling *ikan selangat* house to house and

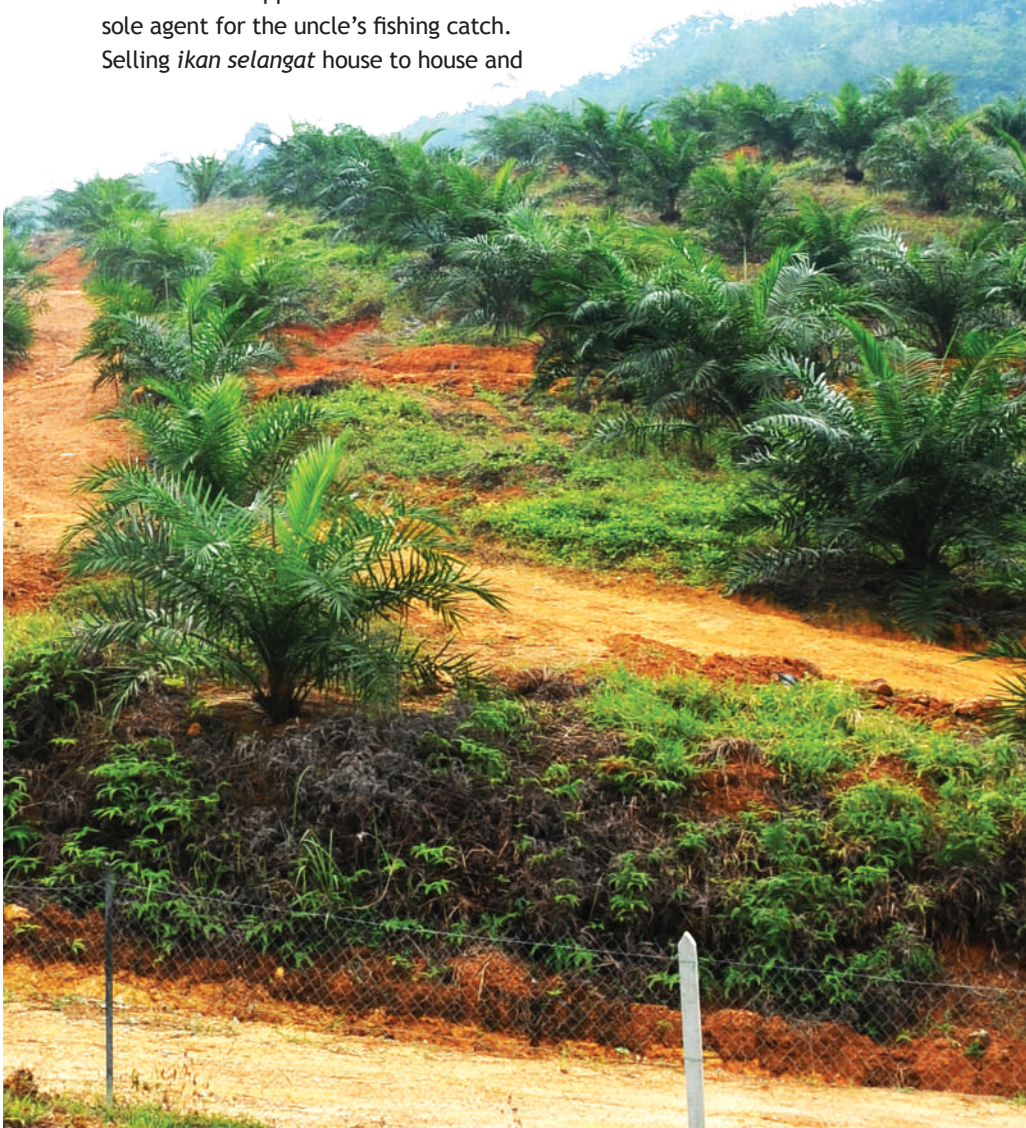
He was **willing to share** with us his **exclusive experience** and those of his **friends to make life meaningful** on campus those days and said that these can be related some other times!

door to door was his business approach to obtain a good sales volume. By the end of the Japanese Occupation in 1945, he had saved enough money to buy a piece of two acre land for his parents to build the house on. Mohd Noor believed that agriculture was a big business even for small farmers.

Asked about his life at Serdang, he joyfully recalled

that his life as a student was full of fun and exciting experiences. Recollecting his good days at Serdang with his Federal Scholar friends, Yahaya Hashim, the late Kadir Baharom those others who are trustees of Yayasan Pak Rashid, Tan Teo Kim, Tan Sri Ani Arope and a senior member, Tan Sri Arshad Ayub, Mohd Noor beamed with a broad smile when relating his experiences.

In the 50s, Mohd Noor related that the facilities at the college then were minimal. There were only 4 dormitories, all named by the British. They were the Tempony, Belgrave, Falkner and Volker. The Three-year Diploma course ran side by side with the One year Certificate course for *penghulus* (*Kampong* headmen), Junior Agricultural Assistants (JAAs), and a few graduates of the Sultan Idris Teachers Training College.







All the students were very highly spirited, dedicated to their work and very passionate about agriculture as a field of study, which form the basis of the graduates career. His eyes sparkled and face glistened as he shared the wonderful moments with his colleagues and all of us listened attentively whenever he shared his memories on what Serdang had meant to him. He was willing to share with us his exclusive experiences and those of his friends to make life meaningful on campus those days and said that these can be related some other times!

Mohd Noor celebrates his 76<sup>th</sup> birthday this year, but always looks great in his farm outfits or boardroom suits. He seldom turned you down, whenever you send an invitation for him to appear on campus either as a Board of Trustees of the Yayasan Pak Rashid or for a simple discussion on topics such as alumni,

management or his favourite subject agriculture.

Dato' Mohd Noor began his extraordinary and illustrious careers in agriculture with the Department of Agriculture, Johore in 1955. "It was during the period between 1955- 67, that I had the opportunity to associate myself with the "seniors" in various fields including the late Mr. Omar Buyong and the late Tan Sri Basir Ismail. The other seniors were from Rubber Industry Replanting Board (RIRB), Rubber Research Institute (RRI) and the estate sector who were wonderful examples of capable, dedicated and committed planters. They were all the time being extremely good corporate citizens and did well in their own professions," smiled Mohd Noor. While in Johore he had the opportunity to work with the earliest batch of graduates from the School of Agriculture who worked in the

Department of Agriculture such as the late Hj. Abd Rahman Mahmood (1929-1931), and the later graduates such as Omar Buyong, Tan Guan Chye, Foo Kee Lin, Tamin Yeop, the late Tan Sri Basir Ismail, the late Shamsuddin Arabi, Aziz Pagon; and Rahman Panjang Aris, Ahmad Lebai Salleh and many others. From the estates, they were Chen Jen Jee, Low Teng Siak, Tan Hong Loon, Cyril Chew, Osman Ismail, Phillip Lye, Wong Cheng Boon, Tan Wak Boon and many others.

In June 1967, Mohd Noor resigned from the State Department of Agriculture to resume his new career as a staff member of the College of Agriculture. As deputy to his former *guru*, Pak Rashid, he immediately saw a great challenge in the new field. The College of Agriculture then was faced with two immediate colossal moves. One was to produce trained manpower at the professional level to





cater for the needs of the country's rural development programme in the entire Agricultural sector, and the other was to prepare the physical and academic foundations for the establishment of the Agricultural University at Serdang targeted in the year 1971. The expectation of all those concerned were extremely high both the *rakyat* (citizens) and the government.

The physical development involved was the addition of a new library, lecture hall, laboratories, faculty buildings, greenhouses, sizeable farm lands for research and practical training, farm machineries and various other infrastructures to support a student population of 10,000 by year 1980.

The academic development on the other hand was simultaneously launched involving academic staff training through various staff exchange programme such as in Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States to mention a few. The development of the support administrative staff became part of the programme. The magnitude and the speed of development both planned and implemented were second to none in

and close to him the discipline and tenacity to give their best. Coming from the same agriculture training ground in Serdang and having the same tutelage, Pak Rashid, the common trait was to pay attention to details. He owed his knowledge in management and business organizations from the great man Tan Sri Basir. After a nine year stint in Fima, he was appointed as Executive Director when the company went public in 1996. Upon retirement from FIMA in 2003, he moved to Tradewinds Malaysian Bhd (a group involved in palm oil and sugar) as Chairman.

Mohd Noor said he owed his success in life to Allah and the blessing from his parents and friends. His policy of not expecting rewards for services rendered to individuals or communities still stands. "I always believe in being honest to myself and to whoever I work with," he said. His philosophy for success is simple and the qualities describe of him being with integrity and passion in his work continues to inspire young alumni to look upon him as their mentor. His involvement with the Alumni group started way back in Johore where he was the Secretary of the Southern Branch

the campus, especially among his former staff and students, created an inspiring environment to them.

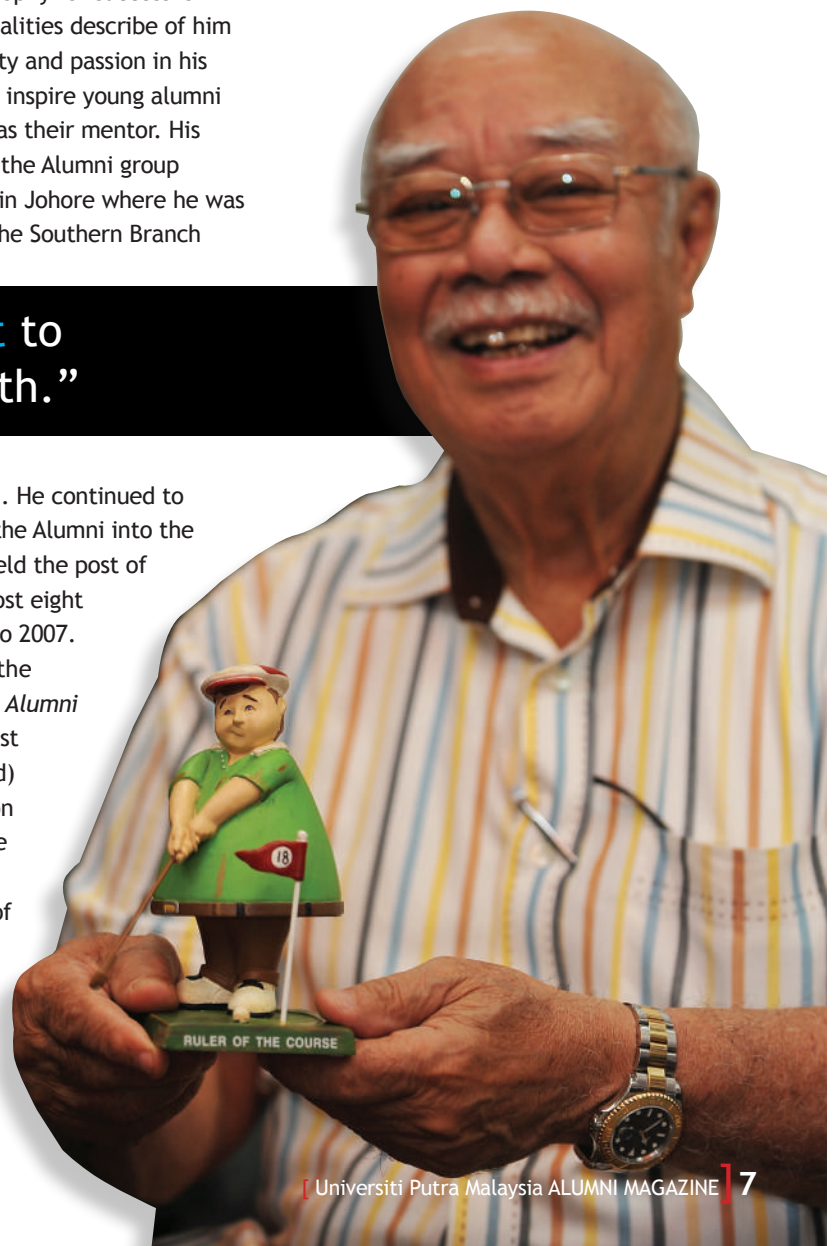
This father of seven children is married to Zainab Ahmad and they are blessed with 16 grandchildren. He still enjoys playing golf, reading and writing. He also engages in creativity-driven hobbies such as farming, gardening and landscaping. Mohd Noor still serves as a Board Member of several Government Agencies such as MARDI (Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute), UPSI (Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris), PAC (Programme Advisory Committee) of Malaysian Palm Oil Board and member of National Labour Advisory Committee (NLAC) besides being the President of MAPA (Malaysian Agricultural Produces Association) and a Council member of Malaysian Palm Oil Association.

**"I always believe in being honest to myself and to whoever I work with."**

terms of achievement and satisfaction. The College of Agriculture stood strong and solid when the two branches in Kuala Terengganu and Bintulu became operational as planned.

Mohd Noor's career developed further when he joined Kumpulan Fima Bhd as its Managing Director in 1983. There he was mentored by his no-nonsense senior from the College of Agriculture, the late Tan Sri Basir Ismail. A highly principled man, Basir Ismail (Dip Agric, 1951) some even called him 'Che gu' or teacher was known to have many talents, with great business acumen and excellent management skills would instill to those who worked

of Serdang Alumni. He continued to be involved with the Alumni into the millennium and held the post of President for almost eight years since 1999 to 2007. He was awarded the *Anugerah Mutiara Alumni* in 2007 (the highest UPM Alumni award) for his contribution to UPM alumni. He was conferred an Honorary Doctor of Science by UPM in 2001. Often his presence in





**T**eamwork and a positive outlook have always been Prof. Dato' Dr. Nik Mustapha R. Abdullah's ingredients for success, while his pro-active attitude and confidence continue to spur him to achieve greater heights. He believes that the negative habit of asking, "What is in it for me?" can often lead to one's downfall and this is something the Vice Chancellor is firmly against. He believes one should never look to achieve personal gains from something we are working for as a team.



# Vice Chancellor

## Prof. Datuk Dr. Nik Mustapha R. Abdullah

# Challenges & Inspirations

• Fairuz Bawaze'er Muchtar  
(Head of Administration, Office of the Vice Chancellor)





"Teamwork and a common vision are critical if we are to achieve our goals and this is something I practise here in Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM)," he said. He mentioned that *a good leader should always have the ability to persuade and encourage colleagues to perform better, while ensuring unnecessary red tape and bureaucracy is eliminated.* "I believe in action and translating our missions and visions into actions are important. Good communication and a cordial working environment are also elements that I emphasise to foster and ensure strong team work!" he said.

*Throughout his career with UPM, Prof. Nik has always aimed to make it the best research university in the region and to be on par with the 'big boys'.*

best, we must remember that there are also others out there who have similar aims. Therefore, we must always be a step ahead if we are going to leave the competition behind," he said. The VC also elaborated that UPM graduates were a cut above the rest as they had additional attributes and were well informed on a wide area of knowledge. *"At UPM, we not only emphasise on academic excellence, but also work to equip our graduates to face all challenges in the employment market. We teach them leadership skills and decorum, while also focusing on soft skills which will help them to get by in the global arena,"* he said.

Though the illustrious professor has no regrets in being appointed the Vice Chancellor, he does however crave for some extra time to spend on writing and doing personal research. "It has been a challenge...but an enjoyable one. I have a good team to work with and have set my goals and challenges. Once you are clear in what you want to achieve, you will strive towards it and this is what we are doing here at UPM," he said.

Prof. Nik stated that the various successes achieved by UPM over the years acts as his motivation and plays an integral part in steering him towards achieving greater success. "I know that we still have loads of work to do and that the playing field is getting

In fact, he has hopes of making UPM a world leader in new tropical agriculture.

*"We have all the means we need to realise our dreams, ranging from human resources and students to world class facilities. In fact, we are already the most sought after organisation for research and there is nothing in our way to prevent us from being the best,"* he said. Since its establishment 78 years ago, he said UPM has not only become the foremost authority in the field of agriculture, but has also gone on to become the top business school in Malaysia and is currently ranked 7<sup>th</sup> in Asia. "We have won a countless number of awards, while numerous products from UPM have since been patented. We have become a force to be reckoned with and if we continue working as a team and with the right attitude, we will surely achieve all our goals and dreams sooner than we expect," he added. He urged all lecturers and students to benchmark themselves against the best and to practice a first class mentality at all times. "While we are working to become the

increasingly competitive day by day. But, to reiterate, the right attitude and motivation is important if we are going to remain in the race. I am happy to note that our staff has the right attitude, thus we are already headed in the right direction," he said.

In closing, UPM's proud Vice Chancellor stressed that he will continue to motivate and steer his staff to do their best for the students and help shape them to become leaders of the future. *"We do not want to merely produce graduates. We want to produce leaders,"* stated Prof. Nik eloquently in parting.





# Deeply Connected to Alumni Association

• Dr. Yusoh Salleh (Dip Agri, 1971)

*Being a member of the Alumni Association of Universiti Putra Malaysia allows you to take advantage of the UPM network and stay connected to fellow UPM alumni. All alumni out there, you are a part of the 134,000 strong alumni community. UPM Alumni Association is run by an executive committee, who provides services and organises various events and ensures the smooth running of its daily operations. Serdang Sun honours those who gave their time and commitment to move the association to greater heights till today.*

**Anas Ahmad Nasarudin**  
(Dip Agri, 1976; Bac. Eng, 1984)  
**President (2009- 2010)**

Recently at a dinner function of the Harvard Business School Alumni Club of Malaysia (HBSACM), the members pondered on its ability to continue after more than 30 years. What could be the galvanizing elements? The answer would be such institution continues to produce the 'cream of the cream' to helm major industries. Perhaps to a certain degree the same could be said of old boys' association such as MCOBA, Old Putras and VIOBA. In short, whoever they are, whatever stature in life they have achieved, the alumni talk fondly and proudly of their schooldays.

In the same light, starting from a humble School of Agriculture, UPM has grown from strength to strength to what it is today and much more. It is one of the universities awarded with the status of a Research University in Malaysia. Therefore, it is not a surprise to see UPM Alumni playing major roles in the expansion of the plantation agriculture, indirectly contributing to the industrialization of Malaysia.

Since its inception, the UPM Alumni Association (PAUPM) has registered 34,000 members out of more than 130,000 graduates. PAUPM must sustain its vibrancy and dynamism for its existence, in tandem with the progress and achievement of the University. Therefore, it must woo its fraternity to continue to be connected and symbiotic to the *Alma mater*. To achieve this, a roadmap is formulated.

Members of the association should heed the views of the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Datuk Dr. Nik Mustapha Raja Abdullah (an alumnus), that 'good universities are known by how excellent their alumni members are'. He added that the members should always be reminded, 'they would not be what they are today, if they had not graduated from this excellent university'. While passion of the past provides reasons to reminisce the good Serdang days and brings the feeling of nostalgia, notable accomplishment of recent graduates provides elements of pride. Pride and passion of the *Alma mater* should flourish with the association.

Presid



**Dato' Seri DiRaja  
Syed Razlan  
Syed Putra Jamalullail**  
(Dip Agri, 1972)

**President (2007-2009)**

Known as the people's man, Dato' Seri DiRaja Syed Razlan Ibni Syed Putra Jamalullail, was a former UPM lecturer (1976 - 1979). Currently, he is a busy State Executive Councilor of Perlis looking after the Investment, Trade and Industry, Science and Technology, Entrepreneurship and International Relations portfolio.

Despite his tight schedule as a politician, he retains his connection with his *Alma mater* and was elected President of the Association for 2007-2009. With a steady business acumen as his foundation, his term as president saw the opportunity to connect the association to the corporate sector. He brought in agriculture knowledge to the public, as well as enhancing the financial support of the association. During this period, an MOU was signed between the Straits Time Publication and PAUPM where a biweekly column was allocated for articles related to agriculture. With his help also, the association launched the Alumni corporate neck-tie as well as the Alumni mascot "The BULL". Dato' Seri Syed Razlan continued to find ways to bring benefit to the association and his *Alma mater* by launching the CIMB Direct Access UPM Alumni Mastercard for members.

For almost three years (2004 - 2007), he served as the President of the Malaysian Rugby Union (MRU) where, a sport MOU between MRU and UPM were at the height of the Malaysian rugby performance. He has relinquished his post as the President of the MRU to concentrate on his love for his family, his *Alma mater*, politics and agriculture. All these are done for the **BRANDING** of the PAUPM, ....for UPM will always be in the MIND, HEART and SOUL of a true alumnus.

**Mohd Noor Ismail**  
(Dip Agri, 1972)  
**President**  
(1990s; 1999-2007)

Mohd Noor's involvement in the alumni activities started since the late 50s with the Southern Branch based in Johore. Typical of those trained in Serdang, to serve and save, he and other diehards of Serdang gave back to the *Alma mater* even from a distant. He continued to be a part of the association when it was led by the late Pak Rashid and Tan Sri Basir. "Dato Mohd Noor is no stranger to the association and the agriculture sector, ever since I could remember." said Rohani, the Director of Alumni Centre who regarded him as her mentor and *guru*.

Despite his wish to step down, he served as President for four terms and he believes that it is by looking at the performance of alumni in their own professions wherever they are, one will know the strength of the *Alma mater*. As President he took the association to a higher level when in 2006 His Royal Highness the Chancellor of UPM was bestowed with the UPM Alumni Fellow Award.

A royal patronage brings the highest level of closeness and bonding of alumni to UPM, sharing a common aspiration for the *Alma mater*. The association also put a commitment to donate annually to UPM Foundation, Yayasan Pak Rashid. Mohd Noor is another son of the Serdang soil, where his life history as an alumnus began. He was regarded as one of the jewels and was awarded *Anugerah Mutiara Alumni*, during the Homecoming Celebration in 2007.



# Council

### Ghazali Salamat

(Dip Agri, 1970)

**President (1986; 1996)**

My interest in the College of Agriculture Alumni started soon after I graduated in 1970. I was not able to participate in all the activities held in Serdang.

Occasionally I attended the AGM.

The President then was the late Pak Rashid, the man whom I have the greatest admiration for his selfless dedication to train us to become leaders. I was

transferred to Kuala Terengganu in 1978 and it was during this time, I felt the need to form an Alumni branch.

This would strengthen the networking and camaraderie amongst the ex-KPM students which was then lacking. Together with a few alumni friends, we formed a branch of UPM Alumni chaired by Dato' Yahya Hashim (Dip Agric 1955). Unfortunately to our despair, this was not supported by the central association as it was not provided for by the constitution. Nevertheless, we move on as informal group as we wanted to have a strong group in Kuala Terengganu. The group organized some activities with funding secured by Dato' Yahya Hashim. We adopted a village where we conducted an integrated agricultural development program. We had lots of fun.

I was transferred to Kuala Lumpur in 1982 and became more active in the association. I was elected the President in the mid 80s and again in the 90s. The constitution was changed to allow for the formation of branches. UPM Alumni branches in Kedah, Kelantan and Pahang were set up and through these branches the alumni could contribute and make their *Alma mater*, UPM known throughout the country. We worked hard to make UPM as the university of first choice among school leavers to further their studies, employee of the first choice amongst job seekers and a source of employees of the first choice for prospective employers. The strong bonding and networking between the graduates of UPM and their success in their respective professions would create more impact on UPM. This would attract good students to come and therefore the university would produce better graduates, attract good employees and attract good employers. For success breeds more success.

### Rohani Ibrahim

(Dip Agri, 1972)

**Council member (1986-1987; 1996 -)  
Director Alumni Centre (1999 -)**

After obtaining my Diploma from Serdang College, I got married and left for University of Florida in 1972. After spending almost 8 years studying entomology in the US, we returned home with three degrees and two beautiful children.

I joined the Faculty of Agriculture UPM in 1980 and in 1999 I was appointed by the UPM Management to head the newly formed UPM Alumni Unit. It was then indeed a journey full of excitement. Being a Director of the Alumni Office then, it was just me alone in the office and I had to do everything myself. Today the Alumni Centre has 16 staff who help implement the strategic plan formulated for UPM

Alumni. The task was to provide the gateways for Alumni to return and give back to UPM, as well as to be the liaison office for the Alumni Association (PAUPM).

As a liaison office, it is my duty to make sure that the platforms are provided for smooth functioning of the association. Making sure of the common bond binding everyone together and that all the Serdangites also have, is a common a great love for Universiti Putra Malaysia.

I am happy that this year my office jointly with the Association have accomplished in publishing the alumni magazine, *Serdang Sun*. I hope this publication will continue to invigorate UPM Alumni with a variety of news. Looking back, I feel gratified that my contributions all these years had provided me with satisfaction and self-fulfillment to serve my *Alma mater*. It has become a part of my soul and has contributed significantly to my professional development and emotional growth.



# s Profile

## Yusoh Salleh

(Dip Agri, 1971);  
**Honorary Treasurer (1986- 1987);**  
**Assistant Secretary & Honorary Secretary**  
**(2005-2009)**

Yusoh Salleh earned his Diploma in Agriculture from Kolej Pertanian Malaya, Serdang in 1971. He left for the United States in 1973 and upon receiving his

Doctorate in Pest Management from University of Florida in 1980, he returned home and served MARDI. After a stint of 7 years he left for the private sector, Hoechst (M) Sdn Bhd and the DuPont Far East Incorporation, Malaysia. While serving MARDI in the 80s he began associating himself with UPM Alumni Association.

He is known to be the most loyal member of the association attending all the functions organized. He was appointed as a council member and held the post from Assistant Secretary to Honorary Treasurer and his final post was the Honorary Secretary for 4 years. He was made to oversee the management of the association office and with assistance of his very able friend and wife, the Director of Alumni Centre, many alumni activities were jointly organized successfully. He hopes that the Association continues to promote fellowship among current and senior members and respect for the high standards which the *Alma mater* strives to uphold.



## Sharifuddin Abdul Hamid

(Dip Agri, 1967);  
**Vice President (1999 - 2001)**  
**and Honorary Secretary**  
**(2001 - 2007)**

After obtaining a Diploma in Agriculture in 1967 from the College of Agriculture, Sharifuddin Abdul Hamid served as an Agricultural Assistant, Department of Agriculture, based at the Institute of Agriculture, Serdang (1967 - 1973). His other degrees, Bachelor of Science (1971) and Masters of Science (1973) were from Louisiana State University, USA. He was the Principal of the Institute of Agriculture, Serdang before joining UPM in 1975.

He was appointed the Head of Department of Soil Science and the Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture. After attaining an Associate Professor in 1981, he went to the University of Ghent, Belgium and earned a Doctor in Agricultural Sciences in 1984. He was appointed the Professor of Soil Science in 1993 until he retired in 1998. Now Dr. Sharifuddin Abdul Hamid is an agriculture consultant and has helped the government to prepare the National Physical Plans, State Structure Plans and District Local Plans.

Sharifuddin is deeply connected to the *Alma mater* and was an active member of UPM Alumni Association. He served as the Vice President in 1999-2001 and Honorary Secretary in 2001-2007. During his tenure he revised the constitution and is presently used by the members of the association. A principled man, he adhered to the constitution when issues arise, a note of reminder that he left to the council members. He would like see more members to reconnect with UPM. He initiated and wrote the proposal for the establishment of Yayasan Pak Rashid in UPM, a task which was later taken up by the Director of Alumni Centre. With his hard work and strong support from the alumni, the foundation was finally approved by the university. Sharifuddin is definitely bonded to his *Alma mater* for he has tried not to miss any of the alumni signature events held on campus and always bring along other alumni with him.





# Pioneering Mobile & Broadband... *A Spirited Bull's Misadventure*

• Mohamed Fauzi Omar (Dip Sc. Education, 1981)

I graduated with a Diploma in Science with Education from Universiti Pertanian Malaysia back in 1981. By then, I had lost all interest to further pursue my studies in the sciences. Being young and naive, I must admit at that point of being upset to have been streamed into it in school. So, in July the same year I enrolled at ITM (UiTM now) to read Chartered Institute of Marketing (UK) and to my surprise, I took just a couple of years to complete the program while others needed 3 or more. Soon I began to realize that I was really more marketing savvy as I began my career with British Petroleum in July 1983.

I owed plenty to BP which financed both my CIM and MBA studies and it was unfortunate that I had to leave the company in December 1987. This was much to the disgust of the management team as I was the first Bumiputra to be seconded to the HQ at Britannic House after more than 30 years of BP's

presence in Malaysia. To make matters worse, it happened a day before my flight to London. It wasn't an easy decision to make but the lure of a new career opportunity in mobile communications was irresistible. After a couple of interesting discussions, I opted to join two others in the then Fleet Group to write the feasibility paper which led us to become cofounders of the soon to be born Celcom. From then on, a whole new world of mobile communications and ICT unfolded itself to me.

I have for over 21 years now walked the talk in ICT, primarily in telecommunications be it mobile, fixed network, broadband, satellite and ISP services as well as their related applications both locally & in the region. It has given me the best of times in my career especially with mobile communications which has evolved rapidly from a voice to a fully converged multimedia communications tool. Today, your mobile phone is also your camera, calculator, personal planner, MP3, radio, television, GPS, email, web-surfing or chat device. Just imagine what it could be in the years to come!!

I have always regarded ICT as a 'strategic enabler industry' while agriculture is a strategic industry in itself. After seeing the culmination of efforts (and its much left to be desired success stories) at all levels in the industry, I do not believe





we can leapfrog ICT to close the gaps with global leaders like the US, Korea or Japan anywhere in the foreseeable future. Countries like Korea and Singapore woke up to ICT way after our MSC Agenda was formulated. Today however, we are not only far behind them but countries like India, China and Thailand has also overtaken us in so many areas.

and primary role of UPM. I for one was saddened by it. The irony is that I wasn't an Agriculture student although I wished that somebody would put into my thick head back then that Agriculture is business .... 'BIG BUSINESS!!!' With my years in ICT, I should be in favour of the name change. That however wasn't the case. I was dead against it because by then I knew how strategic agriculture is, even far more strategic than ICT.

If I had felt qualified to question the name change, I wonder how our beloved guru Tan Sri Rashdan and his peers would have felt about it. Tan Sri was chairman of Telekom and Celcom (my) as well when all these happened. It was Telekom that funded the studies led by Kenichi Ohmae of McKinsey Japan which resulted in the MSC Agenda, ICT revolution, Cyberjaya and in the same spirit, the 'Putra' in UPM.

Time has however lapsed considerably. My take now is that, we need to put the issue to rest as there will always be two sides of the coin and the situation is quite irreversible. The case to me now is not the name but what's in the name, which is where the de facto 'ownership' lies. It is time to pick up the challenges and debate on how to better reposition UPM. We now have 16 faculties which among others include Engineering, ICT, Graduate School of Management, Healthcare & Medicine. To crudely put it, we are now one hell of a technology university and a research one at that. We've got more strength that can be exploited and all these could be put to great use towards the repositioning of our beloved *Alma mater*.

We want to be the undisputed leader and champion in tropical agriculture, yes .. and, we also want to be world class in all the other disciplines. Only then can the campus community of today especially the students be proud and walk tall as a member of the Serdang family. Herein lie our challenges *i.e.* to find and engage in a formula towards these transformations!

We all know Agriculture is big business. Therefore, agriculture should be effectively elevated, iconised and celebrated as the mother of all industries in a way that appeals to the psyche of today's 'y' and 'e' generations, if we are to succeed. Whether it is biotechnology, food technology, material sciences, pharmaceutical or medicine, agriculture is at the start of most of the value chain. Beyond the basic sciences and engineering, an intense and distinct 'agribridging' is needed especially with ICT and business management to see agriculture effectively through the value chain in resulting sectors such as those mentioned above. The realization of effective collaborations and synergistic relationships here is perhaps one critical aspect of the much needed formula for transformation. The possibility of this happening lies hugely with UPM as the only university with much of the end-to end superstructure and human capital to do so.

Thirty one years is not a short time yet it seemed so fresh in my mind the first time I set foot on campus ground. I still recall how much I enjoyed on weekends, the early morning lone jogs to *Bukit Ekspo*. I could almost still feel the cool air amidst the lush green and the sun rays between them as I sat to rest and pondered my future. This was where it all began for me!

I pray that Almighty Allah, the most benevolent instill within us again the glorious Serdang spirit and bonding to continue the good works of our founding fathers, the likes of Allahyarham Pak Rashid, Professor Emeritus Tan Sri Dr. Mohd Rashdan Baba and Dato' Dr. Mohd Noor. It is now up to the present genre of leaders and experts to chart meaningful new paths and milestones for UPM and the country for generations to come. As for me, I am thankful and glad to again be a part of UPM via my involvements in PAUPM and YPR.

**Long live the Serdang Spirit...  
Long live UPM!!**



We may however take some pieces of the pie in niche areas unique to our strengths and synergizing them to first build ICT platforms and applications to best fulfill our own unique needs and, the Agriculture sector may well be one of them. This is on the premise that there are no known solutions out there, we know ourselves better and what we develop should enhance our country's edge in our core industries and activities. Some of these efforts may later find its way to other markets globally if they are found to be meeting certain needs better than the competition, direct or otherwise.

I cannot help but to also address a debate that persists till today among alumni members *i.e.* the *Alma mater's* change of name from 'Pertanian' to 'Putra'. To most who graduated prior to the change, this was not only unacceptable but a 'misnomer' especially to what is felt as the critical



# COMMENCEMENT: *welcome aboard*

• Rohani Ibrahim • Nik Hafzaini Nik Hassan (B. Sc. Consumer Science, 2006)

**O**n a day filled with tradition, joy and excitement make the university commencement ceremony, a moving and memorable occasion. Members of the Class of 2009 were welcomed into the 'Order of the Alumni' by the Vice Chancellor and the UPM Alumni Association. More than 7,800 graduates made it to the Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah Arts and Cultural Centre for the 33<sup>rd</sup> Convocation from 8 to 11 August 2009.

Commencement is a beginning rather than an end of a life-long relationship with the *Alma mater*. Members of the Class of 2009 are certain that the education and values they received at the university will steer them forward and help make a difference to the world for years to come.

"This was a great day for the graduates and their families," said Rohani, the Director of Alumni Centre. "We're proud of what these young men and women have accomplished and we're happy to welcome them into the ranks of UPM Alumni". Chatting informally with the graduates and their families, Rohani and her staff urged everyone to stay bonded to UPM and "...take advantage of what the alumni network has to offer. Remember, your relationship with UPM is not over, it has simply changed. UPM is forever your family."





This year UPM confers an Honorary Doctor of Agriculture to Tun Dato Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi (fifth Prime Minister of Malaysia), while the fourth Vice Chancellor of UPM Dato Dr Mohd Zohadie Bardaie and the former Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) Dr Muhamad Awang were conferred the Professor Emeritus.

Noorhalizam bin Mohamed Noor, BSc Agriculture, felt proud when he was selected as **the recipient of the Chancellor Gold Medal for the Best All Rounder graduate, and Professor Emeritus Tan Sri Dr Rashdan Baba Gold Medal** (a new award) for being an excellent student in Agriculture with leadership quality. He thanked Allah and his parents for their prayers and blessings, not forgetting the strong support and the guidance given by his lecturers. **"Today is a very special day for me and my family. It was hard work and many long hours. I am sure**

I'll be able to overcome these tough economic times with the knowledge that I received from this reputed university. I am presently working in Felcra Bhd. as a Palm Oil Breeder and hopefully will be able to contribute to the growth of the industry," he added.

When asked what he would remember most about his student days, Mohd Khairul Ridzuan bin Abdul Kodir, a graduate in Bachelor of Business Administration remarked "...the great atmosphere on campus....face-to-face attention from my lecturers and professors and the support from my friends. The whole experience was great; therefore I have decided to do my Masters of Business Administration here, though I was offered a job with a bank!"

**"I'm excited!...."** said Abd Elhafiz Mustafa Musa Muhammed (Sudan), who graduated in Master of Manufacturing System Engineering, **"....at last I've done it, and now I'm ready to move on. I'm considering the possibility of coming back for my Ph.D."**

In his address to the new graduates, the Chancellor called upon them to be **good citizen, loyal to the Alma mater and to use the knowledge gained for human development.**

A graduate, representing the 2009 convocation in his commencement speech, reflected the experiences and the undivided commitment they put in to complete their study at UPM.

He reminisced that the world of academe is a **special place where students acquired the ability to think and to use 'With Knowledge We Serve' to the fullest.** At the end of his speech, he wished everyone all the best and cautioned them when facing the "real world", urging them to give back to the *Alma mater* in the spirit of 'Bonding and Belonging'. **The day ended when the Vice Chancellor proclaimed them the Alumni Class of 2009.**





# Green Modes *for* Competitiveness

- Prof Dr. Mad Nasir Shamsudin (Dip Agri, 1978)
- Zakaria Sidek (Associate Alumni, 1982)

**C**ompetitiveness has been traditionally measured by the cost of production, the lower the cost the more competitive you are. In today's scenario, competitiveness is not only cost per unit but includes value creation capacity to add value to products, services and processes. In agricultural sector, competitiveness is enhanced by incorporating sustainable agricultural practices that promote farming profits, agro-ecosystem and products attributes equally.

Hence, economic, social and environmental aspects must be integrated into the agricultural development process in order for our agriculture to be competitive. This is especially so when trade and market access, and consequently competitiveness, is linked to environmental protection as it has been happening for sometime.

## Environmental regulations

Environmental protection is one of the basic elements of sustainable agricultural development. While the environment supplies natural resources for agricultural activities, it is also affected by these activities. The concern for the environmental effects has caused the proliferation of environmental regulations. According to the WTO Environmental Database, the share of environment-related notifications under the WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade has increased from 10 percent in the early 1990s to 16 percent in recent years. Environmental (and health-related) requirements are also becoming more stringent and complex. Standards and regulations concerning maximum residue levels (MRLs) for pesticides and other chemicals are becoming an issue of concern to all countries.





## New legislations

New legislation is also emerging concerning traceability. For example, European Union (EU) Legislation on the Common Organization of the Markets in Fishery and Aquaculture Products, effective as of 1 January 2002, requires exporters of fish and fishery products to label consignments or at the very least accompany them with documents identifying the species name, production method and catch area. Such requirements may be difficult for developing countries to meet and many Malaysian exporters failed to meet these requirements. Rather than endure and conform to the regulations, most of our exporters just simply ignore that potential market. To be able to meet various product-content-related standards and regulations, changes in processes and production methods are often required. Often, policies in the form of regulations such as standards, bans, and restrictions on input use and incentive-based mechanisms such as taxes, subsidies, and marketable permits are implemented as corrective measures. While these policies may meet their environmental goals, they also affect production, trade, investment, technological change, and consumption.

## Innovations and new technologies

Although environmental regulations often raise production costs and reduce competitiveness in the short term, the long term effects are less certain as agricultural producers will adjust and innovate. The regulations altered input values and imposed costs on producers, inducing a change in input use and the subsequent choice of alternative technologies. Research institutions and universities will have to innovate to remedy the constraint imposed by the policy-induced factor scarcity. In agriculture these can be easily done by developing new crop varieties, something farmers are looking forward to. Hence, environmental regulation can act as a signalling mechanism that stimulates research into environment-conserving technologies.

## What drives environmental initiatives

Many technological changes allow a country to improve environmental quality without constricting crop production. At the same time, the technological improvements result in savings on inputs, including energy and environmental amenities. This further decreases the pollution intensity. In addition, higher living standards increase the affordability and desirability of reduced pollution and indirectly lead to better environmental protection.

Given that competitiveness initiatives and environmental protection should be undertaken jointly, which environmental policies are feasible and desirable? There is a supply and demand side that influenced the extent of environmental initiatives. On the demand side, economic growth implies higher income and increasing demand for environmental protection and standards.

On the supply side, governments in developing economies have scarce amounts of resources and human capital to allocate for environmental protection. Normally cleaner technology innovation and adoption in many industrial countries were driven by environmental regulations. Combined with foreign direct investment (FDI) and the use of technology-laden imported inputs, this cleaner technology can be transferred to developing economies. Environmental side-agreements to trade agreements could also facilitate this knowledge transfer.

Studies indicated that the cost of environmental protection is moderate and does not compromise competitiveness. Findings for the developing world are consistent with the extensive literature on the impact of environmental regulations on competitiveness in the developed countries.

To be competitive, there must be convergence between agricultural development and environmental protection which can be summed up as sustainable practices.





# Unbeatable Spirit Marching on with ROTU

• Assoc. Prof Dato' Dr. Idris Abdol (Dip Agri, 1970)

**S**erdang Sun honours the unbeatable spirit and the camaraderie from the military atmosphere exhibited by those who underwent tough training in the military culture of ROTU. The ROTU culture has been in most campuses in Malaysia, in UPM (then College of Agriculture), it began as volunteers for the Territorial Army in 1970. Today when you watch a young gentleman, with a cropped hair, sunburned, walking briskly around the campus....yes you will not be wrong for thinking he must be with the military.....or he must be a ROTU cadet (Reserve Officers Training Unit). He walks tall, polite and stands poised when talking to you.

*Brig. Gen Assoc. Prof Dato' Dr Hj Idris B. Abdol DPMS, PAT, SSA, DSM, KAT, PK, Dip Agric. (Malaya), B Sc, M Sc, PhD (Louisiana State) was the Deputy Commandant ROTU UPM (1988-1998), Commander, Regiment 502(AW) for the State of Selangor (1998-2008) and the Deputy Vice Chancellor(Student Affairs), UPM (2000-2003).*







On Saturday and Sunday, you will see them in green uniform for those in the army cadets and blue for the naval cadets. Weekends become their training days, running around the campus at the crack of dawn, waking up the others, for there will be a room inspection before they go to class and their training begins from the morning till midnight.

### Reorganize Trainees

The stripes on the shoulders differentiate the trainees, if you see them wearing a single stripe on the shoulder they are the juniors, two stripes are the intermediates and three stripes mean they are the seniors, while the floral appellation are for the rank holders of the unit called the *Juniors* and the *Senior Under Officers*. Normally the trainees are grouped into Companies specially named after the classes of warriors, the Kastria, Laksamana, Wira, and Sakti. They represent the 300 students enrolled out of the 26,000 student population on campus, and nowadays in most campuses, women dramatically outnumbered men, 60% of the class is female cadets.

### ROTU and Its Benefits

ROTU is the acronym for Reserve Officers Training Unit and was formed in February 1980 with the restructuring of the Malaysian Territorial Army (TA) also known as *Askar Wataniah*. It was formed with the cooperation of two ministries; the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the Ministry of Defense (MINDEF). The Naval ROTU unit was established at UPM in 2005. Most campuses nowadays provide the opportunity to students pursuing diploma and degree program to enroll in this co-curricular program and worked toward a commission as officers in the Malaysian army or navy. Many students also take advantage of some financial aid packages provided. After graduation, those commissioned can enter one of the military fields or continued with other careers. Basic facilities provided include training camp, administrative

building, parade square, commissioned and appointed academic and administrative officers of the unit and a budget allocated to run the ROTU programme in the campus.

### The HIGH Ranks

The Vice Chancellor is normally appointed as the Commandant while the Deputy Vice Chancellor or a senior staff is appointed as the Deputy Commandant. Presently, the Commandant of ROTU in UPM is Col (H) Prof Datuk Dr Nik Mustapha R. Abdullah and the Deputy Commandant is Lt. Col Othman Jailani. The Ministry of Defense provides the training programme, the training officers headed by a Chief Instructor, and other officers such as the Adjutant, instructors, the training officers, supporting staff, allowances, uniforms, training weapons and other logistics. Currently the Chief Instructor of ROTU, UPM is Major Johan Juan Abdullah.

### ROTU Imprints

The first 37 ROTU officers from UPM, UM, UKM UiTM and USM were trained at the Territorial Training Centre (PUSWATAN), Ipoh in December 1979. To date, there are 12 universities that run ROTU programme throughout the country and has produced 16,482 young officers. Many of the graduates of ROTU are holding high posts in the Armed Forces as well as in civilian organizations. There are a few in the General Corp and Senior Officers of the Armed Forces *i.e.* the Army, the Navy and the Air Force and many of them also joined the Police, Departments of Prison, Immigration, Custom and other public and private organisations.

### The MILITARY Experience

The ROTU experience matures young minds and disciplines bodies, which not only provide the tools for success, but also give them a better understanding of what it takes to be patriotic



and loyal to the country. Hence, the idea of establishing ROTU to produce leaders of tomorrow is a great success. In times of need for national defense, these commissioned officers can be mobilized to lead a group of men as a fighting force in various vital teams like the signals, intelligence, transportations, telecommunication, water supply, power, medical, engineers, and many other departments. They are trained not only in the use of weapons, but they are highly discipline, strong teamwork and with high moral values. The syllabus during their training days includes drills, weapon training, using light and heavy weapons, shooting, Conventional Warfare (CW) and Counter Insurgency Warfare (CIW), map reading, endurance, tactics, leadership and military laws. Everyone has to complete three annual camps during their three-year programme and also participate in activities such as sports, cultural, religious as well as responsible to organize social activities. Their daily training activities include social and military etiquette such as wearing the right attire and proper communication and are required to attend dinners and mess nights, wearing proper attires and be able to entertain guests.

### The FINAL Run

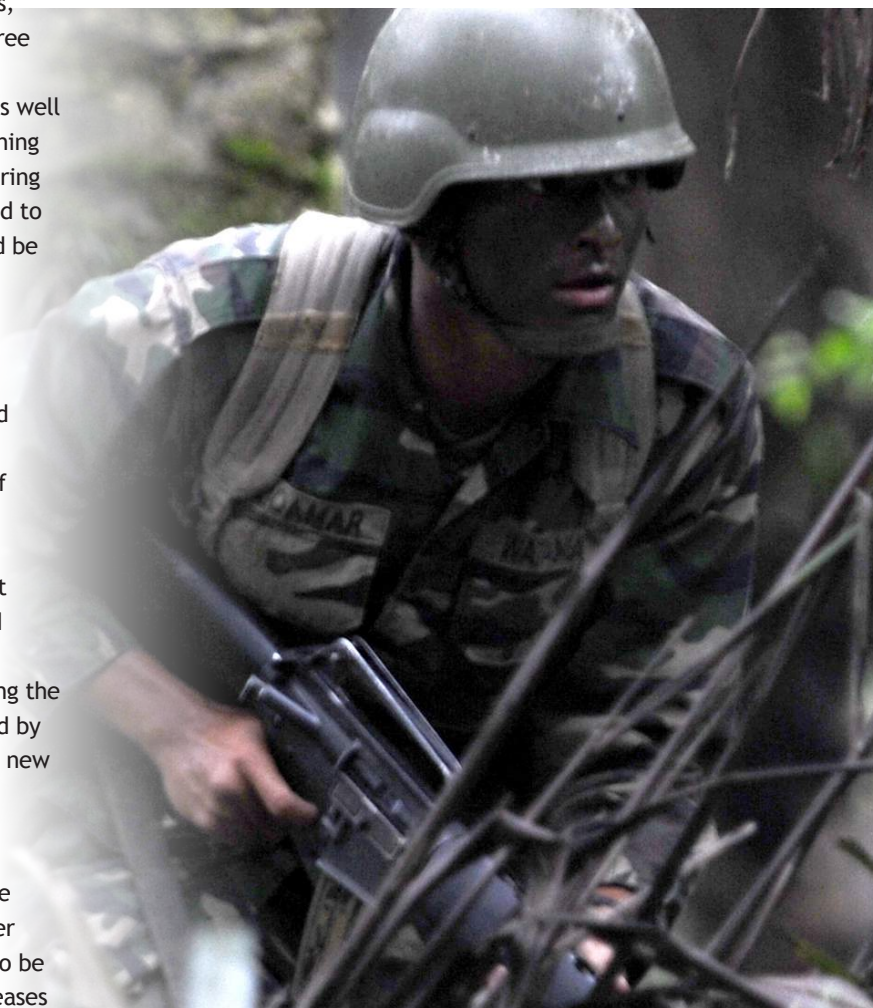
At the end of the three year training, the trainees will be commissioned as volunteer officers with the rank of Second Lieutenant by His Royal Highness Seri Paduka Baginda Yang Dipertuan Agong at a special ceremony organized by one of the universities. This would be the climax of their success after enduring vigorous training physically, mentally and psychologically. Normally, about 70% of the first enrollment managed to be commissioned while the other 30% dropped out during the training, possibly because of poor academic performance, parental objections and loss of interest during the training. This year will be the 28<sup>th</sup> Commissioning organized by Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Skudai with more than 1,000 new young officers to be commissioned by the King.

### ROTU Alumni

The young officers commissioned through ROTU programme at UPM are also the alumni of the University. There are over 1990 ROTU graduates working all over the country, ready to be mobilized in case of an emergency and these number increases over time. They are the product of intense training, mould to become responsible citizens and they are excellence leaders, committed to defense the country and ensure stability of the nation. As Brigadier General of ROTU, I am very grateful to Serdang Sun for honoring the unbeatable spirits unlocked from ROTU program through this article. It was an overwhelming feeling and a sense of pride that whenever I visited army camps, there will always be officers who graduated from this *Alma mater* and they too are proud of UPM. The ROTU programme will definitely continue to be relevant in fulfilling the needs of this nation.

### The ROTU Branding

It is heartening to know in recent years that UPM recognizes the importance of the ROTU programme. A six-credit hour over and above their academic requirement for students to graduate has been given to those enrolled in ROTU. Other recognitions come in the form of providing excellent facilities such as the unit headquarters, staff housing, storage facilities, large parade square, an obstacle course, vehicles and support staff. Just like the other students, the cadets can use other campus facilities for their training such as the playing fields, the stadium and



## ROTU Alumni

*The young officers commissioned through ROTU programme at UPM are also the alumni of the University. There are over 1990 ROTU graduates working all over the country, ready to be mobilized in case of an emergency and these number increases over time.*



the swimming pool. The cadets are housed in the *Kolej Sultan Alaeddin Suleiman Shah (KOSASS)*, the residential college designated as ROTU College. With this arrangement, the cadets are able to live together and have their routine training in one venue.

### The TRIUMPH

After the Commissioning ceremony, the university will organize a mess night for the ROTU to honour the commissioned officers during which excellent cadets are given awards. Normally, the

young officer. Many ROTU graduates are “true national assets”, the country and the universities will benefit from having more of such potential leaders. I pray that a day will come that the Chief of The Malaysian Defense Forces (CDF) will be a product of ROTU, UPM just like that General Colin Powell of the United States who started his army career through ROTC (Reserve Officers Training Corp) and finally became the Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff of the U.S. Defense Force which is equivalent to the Malaysian CDF.

“true  
national  
assets”

mess night are attended by the Chancellor, Pro Chancellors, senior military officers, members of the University Board and senior officers of the university. This has become a signature occasion only given to the ROTU programme.

Ending this column, as someone so passionate about ROTU, I invite everyone to take notice, when one meets a ROTU cadet on campus. Do say hello and give him/her the encouragement for them to persevere in their training as it is not easy to do two things at one time, studying for a degree and training to be a





# Inspiring YOUNG ALUMNI

• Prof Dr. Azali Mohamed  
(Dip Agri, 1981; Bac. Resource Economics 1986)

Every year thousands of graduates leave our campus while thousands more will take their places. Some of the graduates will remain to continue with their studies in our campus while others will go their own way into the world of employment. Many of UPM alumni have carved names in their respected professions locally and internationally. Most of the senior ones are rather active as compared to the junior alumni. The questions that crop up is *“Why is that the younger alumni are not actively contributing to UPM? and how can we bring them back to campus?”*



The UPM Student Affairs Division has actually opened its doors for the alumni to play an active role in student development. Annually since 2004, during the orientation week for the new student intake, every colleges has allocated one night for UPM alumni to come back and talk to the new students. This is the platform for UPM alumni to relate their experiences as students and share with the new students their life after graduation. Such program has managed to bring young and mature alumni back to campus and this will also make our alumni feel that they are important and that their views, experiences and knowledge matter a lot to the students.



Such early introduction is necessary, although it is done only in one night. This program has attracted many young enthusiastic alumni who love their *Alma mater* and feel excited to be back on campus.

Annually the Alumni Centre has been actively organizing many events to bring them to campus such as special interest group gatherings, homecoming, reunions and golf tournaments. Apart from that every residential college has its own Alumni Secretariat and it is via these secretariats that the colleges manage to connect to the past, present and future UPM Alumni.

We would instill in the current and future alumni that alumni engagement should be a life long commitment and they can make even greater impact for benefit of humankind. We want

alumni later. The alumni must return and explain to the students the importance of keeping in touch with their *Alma mater* and the gratification that they will get from that relationship, hence the program during the Orientation week, *An Evening with the Alumni* offers such platform to them.

Students can be made aware of the value of being active alumni and the importance of being a part of the alumni activities while they are still on campus. Being the future alumni, they should also know their roles on campus, and how they can continue to be active as alumni after graduation. By doing this, they are more likely to perceive and acknowledge their relationship with UPM as a worthwhile and valuable experience. Thus the outreach programs currently organized by the alumni office are timely and relevant.

that they are always welcomed, no formal invitation is needed as they are actually part of this campus.

What is the reward for them? The Office of Alumni at UPM will provide them the chance to create and expand networking, providing the platforms for them to practice and share their expertise *i.e.* via talks, mentoring and hands-on demonstration. UPM alumni will be invited to all relevant UPM celebrations.

Different categories of awards for the alumni such as the Most Active Alumni, Outstanding Alumni in the Banking, Agriculture, and Engineering can be given to UPM Alumni at relevant occasions. UPM can create a community for its Alumni to offer their services or ask for services. We should be willing to accommodate requests from our alumni too if we want them to contribute. It should be a win-win



our alumni to contribute actively, and think of their relationship with UPM as a valuable and rich experience that can be shared with students. This can be done if they are made aware of the importance of giving back to their *Alma mater*. We should start emphasizing on this fact the moment they first enter our university. Undergraduates must be made to understand their roles as students and more importantly their roles as

Since the alumni are from many age groups, perhaps the Alumni Centre can design programs which would interest the different age groups. Hypothetically, young alumni (age 22-30) are more flexible with their times and they can be invited to campus more often. The more senior ones can serve as advisors or surrogate parents to our students. The important thing is that the alumni should be informed

situation where in the end everyone is satisfied. We at UPM are always grateful to all our alumni who have contributed in any way to us and we do hope that our alumni will also feel the *rindu* nostalgia or homesickness to their *Alma mater* and will continue to give back to UPM, just as they say "Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues but the parent of all others."



# Adventure with UPM

• Dr. Ahmed Hussein Birima  
(Master of Civil Engineering 2002; Ph.D  
Sanitary & Environmental Engineering 2009)

“Seeking knowledge is a duty of all Muslims, male and female.”

Knowledge may be thought to refer to religious knowledge only but scholars extend this to include all useful worldly knowledge. “In today’s competitive world, defining the aims and methods of seeking knowledge toward achieving a successful life is important. Hence, one has to make the right decision to move into the pathways that gives assurance in his journey toward excellence in life!” Ahmed uttered.

As a Sudanese child, I learned about Malaysia, the land formerly known as Malaya. As my knowledge grew and increased, again I began to learn more about Malaysia and it is now known for its fast development and attractive natural beauty. I was working in Libya as a civil engineer during

the period of 1995 - 1998 when I had this strong urge to go to Malaysia. I had made a decision to go to this country to further my post graduate studies, or at least to find a better job. The idea was supported by some of my friends who had gone to Malaysia. It was in early 1999 when I carried my bags and headed to this tropical rainforest land through a long journey which I started from Tripoli (Libya), then to Malta (through the Mediterranean Sea), and finally arriving at my destination, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

I did not even have admission from any university yet and I did not even have previous contact with them. Therefore, coming to Malaysia under such conditions was a real adventure for me. Nevertheless, I had a strong belief that “When we do the right thing and trust in Allah. We will never lose”.

I met some friends, who were studying in UKM and UPM; I have discussed the options with them, spending a few days thinking and finally I had chosen UPM for me to further my studies. Other factors that made me choose UPM as my first choice were; the media of instruction- English, its academic structure, the reasonably affordable study fees, and the wonderful location of the campus. Just like many new students did before beginning a graduate program, I started







looking for a supervisor with whom I could do my research as well as seek for a funded project in order to get some financial support. I was lucky to have achieved that goal. I met Dr. Suleyman A. Muibi who is from Nigeria, he was previously attached to the Department of Civil Engineering, UPM. When we met, I introduced myself to him and expressed my interest to work for a Master degree under his supervision. Although he welcomed me however, I had felt that there was a bit of hesitation. I had to excuse him for having such reservation because I came to know that there were many cases of which students who started their study programs, used the money under the Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) for months or some even years, but then suddenly vanished. It was very fortunate for me as Dr. Suleyman had a good relationship with my senior Abd Rahman Hamed Nor, who was a student Master in the



Department of Chemical Engineering, UPM. He had strongly recommended me to Dr Suleyman, who had kindly accepted me as a GRA student. Finally I enrolled in UPM in November 1999 as a Master student under his supervision till my graduation. I thanked him for his guidance and happy to learn that currently he is a Professor and Head of Biotechnology Engineering in International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM).

My master program went smoothly and successfully despite some difficulties faced that were related to the nature of the practical aspect of the work and I finally completed it in October 2001.

Initially I was planning to go back home and continue my profession as a civil engineer; however, my lecturers encouraged me to continue for the Ph.D program. I was convinced with the idea hence, I had applied and obtained an admission for Ph.D program and registered as a GRA student in November 2002. As expressed by many who have gone through such study program, it was obvious studying at a Ph.D level, would be more difficult and challenging than that of a master program. Even so, I had made my decision and I should be responsible and accountable for it. I had started my study, but it was not smooth this time as I have taken my other responsibilities as a GRA student. But Alhamdulillah, 'All praise is due to Allah' any how I reached to the end after a long journey with full of obstacles and excitements.

The challenges faced during my adventure as doctoral candidate had caused me to extend my study period. Some were reasons out of my control while others were personal circumstances and misjudgements.

The former includes the slow procedures and backlog in getting the research materials, equipments and difficulty in acquiring the

preliminary data to begin my research; and the unexpected experimental problems that had led to repetition of some experiments. The ones related to my misjudgment was my own ignorance, being dependent on my own experience and that I did not try to share the ideas with others in the same field. Lesson learned from this was that good ideas can be obtained from many kinds of cooperations and discussions through which we can save time. Just like a famous quotation said, we cannot solve our problems with the same level of thinking that created them, so learn to get ideas from others, your peers and fellow researchers local or international beside the advices of the supervisors. Ideas are like rabbits, you get a couple, learn how to look after them, and pretty soon you have dozens.

During the long stay that I spent in UPM as student, I had established very good relationships with my supervisors, colleagues and technicians. I learned about the Malaysian culture and their food moreover, I had also shared with them their happiness and sadness. Working as a demonstrator in the Department for many semesters gave me the chances to be close to many students, learnt about their behaviors and have overall improved my communication skills.

Despite the difficult days that I had faced in certain times, my journey to this lovely country Malaysia and my adventure as graduate students in UPM will be the most valuable thing in my life that I will treasure and never forget. I deeply appreciate the kindness and the polite ways Malaysian has treated me. May Almighty Allah keep UPM, my *Alma mater* moving forward and be among the top universities in the world.





# Transforming Students into Community Leaders through ALUMNI Partnership

• Mohd Sabrie Mohamad Salleh (B. Acc, 2009)  
President, UPM Students Representative Council (2007-2008)

*Student alumni connection is an important factor in producing quality graduates. Through direct and indirect interaction with successful alumni, students would be able to utilize the experience of alumni to achieve higher academic performance and sharpen their soft skills.*



The main output of a university is its graduates. Who have the intellectual responsibility and are expected to contribute their knowledge for the benefit of the society and the nation. In addition, the graduates also have a moral responsibility to their *Alma mater*. Their performance, attitude and conduct reflect upon the academic institution they graduated from as they are the ambassadors of that university.

Community leadership has been identified as one of the five main indicators for creating a stronger community and civil society together with knowledge, volunteerism, networking

and partnerships. With over 130,000 alumni, UPM harbours a rich source of experience members who can share and impart their experiences (as mentors) to guide these students to become future community leaders.

The UPM Students' Representative Council (2007/2008) set up a Volunteerism, Community and Alumni Secretariat, with an aim to enhance the contribution of society and alumni towards student activities. A survey of 4,000 UPM students found that approximately 71% have never approached or interact with alumni and 83% have never participated in any student-alumni activities. The survey also indicated that students did







not responds well to alumni activities publicised through the publicity materials and words of mouth. To encourage greater student participation in promoting alumni activities, entail the following recommendations:

**Alumni Walk** - a gallery specifically created displaying portraits of successful alumni and their notable achievements.

**Clusters networking** - a student-alumni partnership be formed in clusters of specific interest groups such as business, youth entrepreneurship, medical association and counseling. It must be noted that these clusters must have active involvement of the target alumni. To address strategic clusters networking, it is recommended the social media network be utilized.

### **Networking through new social media** -

Friendster.com (2009) reported that 2,411,000 users from Malaysia in the 15-24 years age group utilize social media network such as Friendster, Facebook and MySpace. On Facebook alone there are 1,050 students who are linked to UPM groups and interacts through photo sharing, wall posts and discussion board. It was also found that students spend most of their time updating their personal profiles and joining other groups with similar interest.

**Freshman-Alumni Connection** - it is important to directly associate the freshman with alumni of a specific interest group during the orientation week. This would provide a foundation to promote alumni activities and collaboration with the students. It is during this early period that freshmen tend to be influenced by a particular group which affects their mindset throughout their study in the university.

**Organised Volunteerism** - one of the most successful projects organized by the UPM Student Representative Council was the "Flood Community Service Project" participated by 500 students. From the feedbacks, about 70% would like to be involved about in future projects. Volunteerism can enhance interaction and participation between students and alumni and can also be expanded to include academia and technical advisories.

These recommendations hopefully enhance the partnership and corporation between alumni and students in transforming them into future community leaders.



Moments on Campus

# *Tales of Fruits Bats & HANTU RAYA*

• Dr. Mohamad Roff bin Mohd. Noor (Dip Agri, 1982)

**M**y three years as a Diploma of Agriculture student in UPM is the most memorable chapter in my life. I could not help but smile each and every time when sweet memories of my college life of yesteryears flashed across my mind. Diploma students in those days are naughty and playful lot, and I was no exception. In pursuing my dream to become an estate manager, I landed my foot in UPM in 1979. There were only 3,000 students at that time and a majority of us walked from point to point in campus, although some well-off students rode motorbikes, nevertheless their numbers were negligible. The scenario today can be insulting even envying at times as some students drive posh cars to schools while their lecturers drove locally assembled car.

Life as a diploma student was rather interesting and fulfilling. Lectures were basically in the morning and the afternoon was meant for field works or farm works. For the first year diploma students, they had to do vegetable gardening and every student was required to plant five beds of vegetables. We were graded based on the quality of our vegetables and maintenance of our plots. The *siswi* (female students), especially the pretty ones, were quite lucky, as the boys would usually gave them some helping hands from field preparation, watering to even harvesting. Of course this was a gentlemen way of wooing them, and most *siswi* could hardly resist and say “no” to such an attractive offer.







*The siswi, especially the pretty ones, were quite lucky, as the boys would usually give them helping hands from field preparation, watering to even harvesting. Of course this was a gentlemen way of wooing them, and most siswi could hardly resist and say “no” to such an attractive offer.*



But, the more interesting part was during share farm for the second and third year students. Students were divided into groups of ten each and they were required to raise roughly 200 chickens and cultivate an acre of vegetables. Most groups failed in this venture, not because of our lack of trying but because the poultry and vegetables usually went missing, perhaps stolen by other groups with similar venture. As tit for tat, Group A would steal Group B's chicken for weekend barbeque while Group C will steal Group D's jagung (corn) for dinner. At first, we thought this must be the job of *hantu raya* (a local version of the phantom or poltergeist) but gradually, we were convinced that this was the work of human, maybe some of our mischievous buddies. We ended staring at each other but could not figure out who the culprits

were. Until now, I am still not sure if this could be considered as sabotage. What I was sure was my stomach was well taken care of those days. We eventually had to make up for the losses as our chicken feed and fertilisers for they were on advance from the UPM Farm Office and had to be paid back by the group.

Rambutan and durian trees were aplenty in UPM and during the fruit seasons we were as happy as the fruit bats. There was no law to prohibit fruit bats from stealing the fruit but there were rules that prevented us from plucking or picking up any fruits within the fenced orchard. Most of the time, our craving for the fruits were so strong that we metamorphosed into *fruit bats* at night and went out in a group of five for our *Mission Impossible*. We climbed over the fence during





the wee hours in the middle of the night when the security guards were away, plucked and collected our harvest in ninja speed under the moonlight and brought them back to share with our coursemates. Sometimes luck was not on our side, some students, myself not excluded, were caught and we were issued with warning letters from UPM. Nevertheless, we considered ourselves luckier than the real fruit bats, as these mammals would be the target of hunters during the fruit seasons. Although the warning letter had served as a deterrent, the effect was temporary. Whenever we looked at the bountiful rambutans hanging on the trees and imagined the fragrance of durians again, we transformed and the metamorphosis took place again at night.

Teasing girls was one of our so called “elective papers” in those days. As a resident of Block Melor in the Third College, it was common to see the Fifth College students passed by our college to get to the lecture hall. Whenever girls passed by, we would whistle and utter some naughty or even sarcastic remarks, which only prompted the girls to change their steps from walking to jogging or running. Well, that was our happy moments.

Although we were playful lots, many of us completed our diploma and continued with our degree courses. Today, some are holding key positions in some universities, government agencies and the private sector. Many of them became successful estate managers. Although I did not fulfill my ambition to become an estate manager, that does not matter as I am happy with my position and with what I am doing right now at MARDI. Researching into plant virology and agriculture for a better yield is my challenge, more so as we shoulder the goal in helping the government to boost the country’s food output. As I flipped through my albums and enjoyed the taste of some of the tropical fruits these days, I could not help but



travel back in time down memory lane and reminisce our days of innocence.

I missed the funs that we all had then, and I wish all my previous coursemates are in good health and enjoy their happiness and good life. After all, we were a part of a family, a family of fruit bats which escaped the bullets and a group of *hantu raya* that no *bomoh* would be able to capture and seal in a bottle.



# Santai Kopitiam *with* Alumni

• Dr. Dayang Laila Abg. Abd. Majid  
(MSc Advanced Engineering Materials, 2001)



**R**ealizing the importance of keeping

in touch with its alumni in the nation's aeronautical industry, the Department of

Aerospace Engineering

(KAA), Universiti Putra Malaysia

hosted an inaugural informal Alumni Gathering Santai Kopitiam Bersama Alumni KAA on 26 April 2009 exclusively for its graduates. It was held at the lakeside foyer of Faculty of Engineering. The event was opened to all KAA Alumni and the current third year students. The gathering marked the beginning of a chapter for the alumni of the Department. Since its establishment in 1996, the department has produced 374 graduates in Bachelor of Aerospace Engineering Honours.

The reunion brought in 43 alumni from various batches started from 1999-2008. A total of 35 third year students joined to meet their senior alumni. In attendance was Professor Ir. Dr. Mohd. Saleh Jaafar, the Dean of the Engineering Faculty, and, Mr. Zakaria Sidek, the Deputy Director of the Alumni Centre as special guests.



Dr. Abd Rahim Abu Talib, the Head of Department welcomed everyone and reminded all alumni to stay in-touch with their fellow classmates and professors, for they would be the role models for the students to emulate. Dr. Dayang Laila Abang Abdul Majid, Head of Student Affairs and Alumni was indeed overwhelmed with excitement to see the graduates returned to the faculty. She called for the alumni to create a lifelong bonding to UPM, through their engagement with the Departmental, University, their classmates and at the professional level, for they should be proud to be among the alumni of the reputed institution in the country. She also announced that the event would be annually held and would like to see more alumni return to the faculty and be actively involved with the students, the future alumni of the Department.

They were served, with a whole variety of mouth-watering local delicacies with unlimited servings of coffee, tea, and the nation's all-time favourite *cendol*. Everything was free of charge!. It was indeed an opportunity for the alumni to mingle with each other, reconnecting to old friends and networking with other professional former colleagues. There were lucky draw sessions and it was fun for everyone as no one returned home empty-handed, as the department had prepared a special gift for all, a customized umbrella designed by the department, as memorabilia and token of appreciation. The event concluded with a group photography session.

The Department of Aerospace Engineering UPM thanked those who worked hard to put the event together and all of the alumni for making the event a reality and looked forward to meet again.





# UPM Alumni Reunion

## 'Celebrating 7 Decades of Alumni'

• Rohani Ibrahim • Amiruddin Mustafa (BSc.Comp, 2001)

**U**PM Alumni Reunion is a tradition highly awaited for by all alumni. This year the reunion on 21 February 2009, saw a turnout of more than 1,000 alumni, ranging from Alumni Class of 1950s to the young alumni of the millennium, coming from all over the country to the Banquet Hall to celebrate the 7 decades of alumni.

Guests and distinguished alumni at the event include the senior members Professor Emeritus Tan Sri Dr. Rashdan Baba, Tan Sri Ani Arope, Dato' Dr. Mohd. Noor Ismail, Dato' Dr. Hashim Abdul Wahab, Datuk Dr. Abd. Aziz Sheikh Abd. Kadir, Datuk Dr. Alang Perang Abd. Rahman Zainuddin, Dr. Sharifuddin Abdul Hamid, entrepreneur Habibur Rahman Ibrahim and the Poles Explorer, Datin Paduka Dr. Sharifah Mazlina Syed Abdul Kadir. Remarkably Alumnus Class of 73, Ir. Hj. Muhammad Salih Bin Hj. Ja'afar

rounded up 130 of his class mates, the highest number of friends reunited by an individual.

The most memorable moment of the evening were the official launching of UPM Alumni Magazine 'Serdang Sun' - a publication that exemplify the strong commitment of UPM Alumni Centre and UPM Alumni Association in publishing a magazine and a revival issue that symbolize a great comeback for UPM Alumni magazine. The magazine, appealing and informative to all level of alumni, is an intermediary between UPM and her alumni.

Alumni's official mascot called 'The Bull' was officially launched by Mohd Noor Ismail, Past President of PAUPM who was similarly nicknamed by his friends and students. 'The Bull' symbolizes the great Serdang Spirit that has contributed towards development of agro industry and sets the foundation of the new industries in Malaysia.



The magnificence and success of the event has proven that the sense of loyalty and spirit of camaraderie amongst Alumni and the *Alma mater* are still alive and flourishing and will continue to be strong in the future. UPM University Management must be thanked, for without their co-operation and commitment the 7 Decades of UPM Alumni Reunion would not have been a success. For documentation purposes, photography sessions for each decade were captured.

## Kinta Valley get Together

Adrian Liew (BSc Agribus, 2002)

**T**he Kinta Valley Gathering which has been planned since early 2008 was finally held in Clearwater Sanctuary Golf Resort, Batu Gajah on 6 March 2009. This gathering was part of UPM Alumni Association outreach activity to members, to reignite the passion for the *Alma mater* and strengthen bonding and friendship among

members at the state level. Close to 30 alumni made their way to the gathering which was put together by the Perak Chapter representative, Arifin Abdul Latif, Director of Department Perak (BSc Agri, 1978) and retiree Mohd Sadri bin Mohd Tajuddin, (Dip Agri, 1974).

Alumni were welcomed by YBM Dato' Seri DiRaja Syed Razlan Jamalullail,

PAUPM President (2007-2009). In his speech, he made a sincere remark that such gathering should be encouraged and emulated by alumni chapters in other states. He acknowledged all those people who worked so hard to make it a reality. A slide show of highlights of PAUPM activities was also shown to stimulate interest on the upcoming alumni events.

Adding more cheers to the gathering was the attendance of two PAUPM Council Members, Dato' Dr. Mohamad Hashim Ahmad Tajudin and Adrian Liew;



# Alumni Day 21 May

• Rohani Ibrahim  
• Nik Hafzaini Nik Hassan

Universiti Putra Malaysia commemorated UPM Alumni Day 21 May with a forum discussion that highlighted the history of UPM, the human capital generated by the university and the aspiration of alumni. The historical date is to be celebrated by UPM and all UPM Alumni to honour the date of the establishment of UPM from a School of Agriculture in 1931, and now has transformed to a university of international repute. Like the Serdang Angels who makes rugby look easy, great planning and leadership can make an event looks like it happened all by itself. Such was the case at UPM Alumni Day 21 May. More than 500 staff members, retirees, faculty and alumni made to the Banquet Hall for the half-day celebration.

The Pro Chancellor, Tan Sri Dato' Dr. Nayan Arifin, officially launched the day. He was proud to be a part of the celebration and reiterated his belief

that a good seed makes a good crop and that UPM for years has created histories of success and it accords recognition.

The morning began with a multimedia presentation 21 Mei 'Titik Permulaan' to reminisce the beginning of a journey by UPM as credited by notable people, alumni and staff of UPM was shown to the audience.

UPM Library came forth to organize a forum on the Serdang Heritage: Imprints the Growth of UPM. The panelists were Dato' Dr. Mohd Noor Ismail, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Development and Student Affairs, 1975-1983), Anas Ahmad Nasarudin, President UPM Alumni Association, (2009-2010) and Mohd Syamsul Salleh, President, Students Representative Council (2008-2009). The forum moderated by Mahfoor Hj. Harron highlighted three core areas; history of UPM, UPM students

human capital produced by the Universiti and the aspiration of UPM Alumni. The audience acknowledged the efforts of UPM Management then and now for creating a remarkable, resilient institution that has stood the test of time. "The success of what they did in the past still fill us with amazement and gratitude," said Amir Hamzah, the Chief Librarian who will make sure that the forum continues annually as "Oral History of UPM", and all the information documented and archived by UPM Library.



while James Ho and Ding Toy Huat came all the way representing the Johor Chapter 'Serdang Sunshine' and Penang Chapter.

The evening was filled with fun and excitements, some members rendered a few oldies while some took the opportunity to share their opinion on how Perak Alumni Chapter could play its role actively and be successful in its future activities. As always, the event ended with a group photography session.





# 'Bonding & Belonging' through ACE

• Assoc Prof Dr. Kalthum Hashim  
(MSc, Vet. Pharmacol. 1984)

*'Please allow me to swap  
my tie for UPM alumni tie'.*

That sum up the statement (to our delight!) uttered by YB Dato' Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, Minister of Defence Malaysia, aptly reflecting the theme for this year's Alumni Conference for Excellence 2009 (ACE'09) - Bonding and Belonging - when officiating the conference. After all he is a UPM alumnus (M.Comm 2000, Ph.D 2008).

Universiti Putra Malaysia and UPM Alumni Association were given the honour to host ACE'09 which was held at the Mines Beach Resort Hotel, Seri Kembangan, Selangor from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> June 2009. The conference was attended by 95 participants from 22 universities in Malaysia.

The objectives of ACE'09 were to support the Alumni Office of the university in developing appropriate programs to attract young alumni to return to campus (bonding), nurturing the spirit of camaraderie and pride towards the *Alma mater* (belonging) and to use the alumni office as a liaison and strategic platform to develop closer networking among IHL.

The first day saw the arrival and registration of participants, including those from Sabah and Sarawak. To 'break the ice' and start the conference, the organizers decided to invite members from UPM alumni chapters, IHL alumni offices and guests of the conference to a round table discussion. Issues discussed include financial matters, support from university management, organizational structure, increasing membership, strategies to attract young alumni, alumni communication, traceability and tracking, prime mover of alumni activities and alumni databank.





To unwind after an active and productive afternoon, participants shared their experiences during the 'Intervarsity: Sharing Moments' after the dinner. To lighten up the mood, the President of Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia Alumni Association mesmerized the audience with his self-composed song. Representatives from USM, UTM, UiTM, Universiti Malaysia Perlis (UNIMAP), Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS), Universiti Tun Abdul Razak (UNITAR) and Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia shared stories about the alumni programme in their respective institutions. Universiti Malaysia Sabah was given an arousing applause for sending the most number of participants.

The following day started with the opening ceremony attended by invited guests including members of the UPM Board of Directors, Senior Management, Deans, Directors and the President of UPM Alumni Association. The conference was officiated by YB Dato' Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, Minister of Defence, Malaysia. The opening ceremony ended with the UPM Alumni Day 21 May video presentation featuring UPM alumni from the 50s to the current ones talking about the significance of being an active alumni.

The conference continued with invited paper presentations concerning alumni and its relationship with *Alma mater*. The topics include Alumni-*Alma mater* relationship, bonding, belonging and giving back, what drives people, alumni's expectations and setting up an alumni centre in IPTS. Mohamad Sabrie Mohamad Salleh, Past President of UPM Students Representative Council was also invited to talk on "Transforming Students into Community Leaders through Alumni Partnership".

After lunch, participants were brought on a tour of UPM campus. Participants were pleasantly surprised when they

reached the *Bukit Ekspo* to be received by the University Management. After a short briefing by officer from *Taman Pertanian Universiti* (Universiti Agricultural Park) on its function and available services, the participants feasted on delicious local traditional snacks such as *ubi kayu rebus* served with *sambal*, salted fish and grated coconut, local Malay *kueh- pumpkin wrapped in banana leaf* and hot drinks. The evening ended beautifully with the sun setting in the horizon and satisfaction mirrored in the faces of both organizers and participants.

In the evening, ACE'09 dinner was held at the beautiful man-made beach front. It was made livelier with songs and music from Band Putra UPM including the melodious strumming of the *gambus*.

Two final papers 'Getting off the Ground' and 'Internationalising Alumni Chapters' were delivered on the last day of the conference. A forum 'Giving Back' was moderated by Assoc. Prof Dr. Azahari Ismail. The three panelists present were Dato' Dr. Mohd Noor Ismail (UPM Alumni Association), Puan Mazlena Mohamad Hussain (IIUM) and Puan Hjh Nor Mottahatti Mat Noor (UiTM). They again stressed the importance of strong support, loyalty and continuing engagement with the *Alma mater*.

Tuan Haji Anas Ahmad Nasarudin, President, UPM Alumni Association delivered his closing remarks and thanked all participants. He hoped ACE09 has achieved its desired aim of 'Bonding and Belonging'. Congratulation Universiti Malaysia Perlis (UNIMAP)!!, the host for ACE'10.

Till we meet again, Au Revoir







## Connecting to Future Alumni: Outreach Program

• Zakaria Sidek • Mohd Fikri Abu Bakar (B.Comm, 2006)

**D**esigned to be more than just a publicity effort for the Alumni Centre, the Outreach Program which run ever since 2003, is a platform to nurture the spirit of camaraderie and a sense of identity among future alumni (students). The programme hopes to attract young alumni to be engaged as active alumni and how they can give back to their *Alma mater*.

The Deputy Director of Alumni Centre, Zakaria Sidek provided information about the definition of alumni, the history of UPM Alumni and briefs of the upcoming events for 2009. The office is delighted to bring to the colleges, another opportunity to create an enriching alliance between UPM Alumni Association

and UPM Alumni Centre.

The students seemed very keen as the Q and A sessions initiated numerous questions from them. Many seem interested on how they could link to the Centre in assisting them with alumni activities. This partnership envisages active contribution of UPM future alumni to the *Alma mater*. For 2009, five sessions of Outreach Programme were conducted:

- 17 Feb 2009 at K11 for K10 and K11
- 18 Feb 2009 at K14 for *Kolej Serumpun*
- 27 Feb 2009 at K 5 for KTDI, KC, K5, K6, KMR
- 21 Mac 2009 at K17 for K17
- 1 April 2009 at KTP for K2, K13, KPZ, KTP, and KOSASS

## Alumni Mentoring

- Saiful Bahrie Abd. Manap (B.Econ, 2003)
- Raja Badruzaman Raja Azhar

**T**he Alumni Mentoring which began in 2004 is a program where students have the opportunity to meet the seniors and experienced alumni during afternoon tea. It allows the alumni to share their experiences, give guidance and encouragements to future alumni of UPM. This program not only benefited the students, but gives alumni an opportunity to reconnect and give back to the *Alma mater* while fostering stronger bonding to the university. No contribution is too small for UPM.

Since its inception, many illustrious and successful alumni have attended this programme including YBM Dato' Seri DiRaja Syed Razlan Jamalullail, Ghazali Salamat, Zia Ul-Haq and Nasmizan Mohamad.

In 2009, three mentoring sessions were held during the Second Semester 2008/09 at the Dining Hall, Centre for External Program, UPM. The sessions on 12 February, 12 March and 26 March gathered close to 40 mentors and 350 students. While enjoying delicious *bihun goreng*, *karipap* and *teh tarik*, the



students listened to great stories and fun experiences of the mentors at UPM. It was a great way for students to mingle with alumni icons, academicians, professionals and even chief executives of organizations. The friendly and casual atmosphere allowed the young students to be daring. Many asked about the challenging job market and how they should prepare themselves to be more marketable graduates. One of the most frequently asked question was "What does it take to be successful in their desired career?"



# Homecoming V

Date : **31 October 2009**

Venue : **Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah,  
Arts and Cultural Centre**

*Returning to*  
**Serdang**

School of  
Agriculture  
1931 - 1947



College of Agriculture, Malaysia  
1952 - 1961



College of Agriculture, Malaysia  
1962 - 1964



College of Agriculture, Malaysia  
1965 - 1971



Universiti Pertanian Malaysia  
1971 - 1997



Universiti Putra Malaysia  
1997 - present

## Reply Slip:

I'm interested / not interested in attending the **Homecoming V**

Number of alumni / friends joining me : ( \_\_\_\_\_ )

Name : \_\_\_\_\_

Position : \_\_\_\_\_

Organization and Address :  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (office) : \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (handphone) : \_\_\_\_\_

Fax : \_\_\_\_\_ Email : \_\_\_\_\_

Year of Graduation : \_\_\_\_\_

☐

Diploma

☐

Bachelor

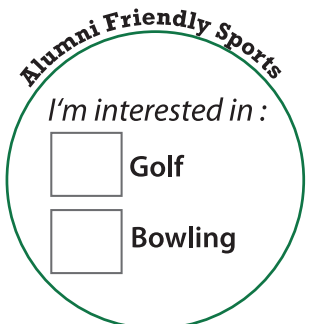
☐

Master

☐

Ph.D

Signature : \_\_\_\_\_ Date : \_\_\_\_\_



Send photocopy of reply slip to :

**HOMEcoming V Secretariat**

Alumni Centre, Bangunan C13, Lorong Pongamia,  
43400 Universiti Putra Malaysia  
Selangor Darul Ehsan

For details visit the website : [www.alumni.upm.edu.my](http://www.alumni.upm.edu.my)  
Tel : 03-8946 7886 / 8946 7274 / 8946 6080 Fax : 03-8656 6933



# *Returning to Serdang* **Homecoming** V

**Be a part  
of the happening !**

**ALUMNI FRIENDLY SPORTS**

Golf  
Bowling  
Rugby

**31 OCTOBER 2009**

Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah  
Arts and Cultural Centre  
Universiti Putra Malaysia

*Jointly organized with*



**UPM ALUMNI ASSOCIATION**